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Executive Registry

11-5734

24 JUN 1959

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Gordon Gray  
Special Assistant to the President

SUBJECT : Unauthorized Disclosure of  
Intelligence Information

1. On 22 January 1959 a request was directed to the Office of the Secretary of Defense Member of the United States Intelligence Board for an investigation of what appeared to be an unauthorized disclosure of intelligence based on an article appearing in the Washington Evening Star of 14 January 1959 under the by-line of L. Edgar Prina. This article reported that "the United States has evidence that the Russians failed last year to probe the moon with rockets", and attributed the source of this information to a high ranking Defense Official.

2. The Office of the Secretary of Defense has conducted an extensive investigation which failed to establish any information to support the newspaper writer's contention that this information was furnished by a high ranking Defense Official. In addition, the investigation noted that the verbal release from the Department of Defense, in connection with the MECHTA firing on 2 January 1959, was publicly misinterpreted to mean that the United States had knowledge of the Russian lunar probe before the actual firing and further, the 12 January 1959 issue of AVIATION WEEK reported "11 or 12 earlier Russian attempts that failed". In light of these factors the Department of Defense is doubtful if this incident is, in fact, a case of an unauthorized disclosure of intelligence information.

3. I feel that the investigation conducted in this matter has adequately explored the various factors pertaining to this public statement and that no benefit is to be derived by further investigation. Accordingly,

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I am considering this matter as closed. The investigative report was furnished in single copy and will be made available if you so desire.

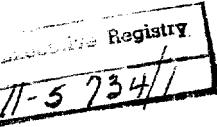
**SIGNED**  
**ALLEN W. DULLES**  
**Director of Central Intelligence**

**Distribution:**

**Orig & 1 - Addressee**  
1 - DCI  
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23 JUN 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Unauthorized Disclosure of Intelligence Information, Washington Evening Star, 14 January 1959, Article Entitled, "Pentagon Says Several Red Moon Shots Failed"

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for your approval. Such recommendation is contained in paragraph (4).
2. On 22 January 1959 you requested the Office of the Secretary of Defense Member of the United States Intelligence Board to conduct an investigation of an article appearing in the Washington Evening Star of 14 January 1959 which appeared to be an unauthorized disclosure of information. In this article, i. e. Edgar Prina wrote that "a high ranking Defense official . . . who declined use of his name" stated that "the United States has evidence that the Russians failed last year to probe the moon with rockets." In addition, the article made reference to super radar and radio devices which reportedly gathered data on previous Soviet Missile and satellite launchings.
3. An investigation was conducted by Mr. Robert Dechert, General Counsel, Office of the Secretary of Defense, in the course of which numerous senior officials of OSD were interviewed. The investigation failed to disclose any officer of the Office of the Secretary of Defense as being responsible for this reported statement to Mr. Prina. The investigation further raised a question as to whether this was, in fact, an unauthorized disclosure and cited as a reference the 12 January 1959 issue of AVIATION WEEK which reported "11 or 12 earlier Russian attempts that failed." In addition, it was reported that the verbal release from the Department of Defense in connection with the MECHTA firing on 2 January 1959 was widely misinterpreted to mean that the United States had knowledge of the Russian lunar probe before the actual firing. It appears that this investigation has adequately explored the logical facets of this matter and that no benefit would be derived by further investigation.

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In view of the fact that the investigative request was addressed only to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, it is not felt that a summary of the investigative results should be circulated to all the Members of the United States Intelligence Board.

4. It is recommended that, (a) the investigation be closed; and (b) the attached memorandum to Mr. Gordon Gray, Special Assistant to the President, informing him of the results of the investigation be approved.

SIGNED

**Sheffield Edwards**  
Director of Security

Attachment:  
Memo to Mr. Gordon Gray

24 JUN 1959

The recommendation in paragraph (4) is approved.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

SIGNED

**ALLEN W. DULLES**  
Director of Central Intelligence

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